

**“SPECIALIST SERVICES,  
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS  
AND THE ROYAL COLLEGES  
SHOULD RUN AND EVALUATE  
PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION,  
TRAINING AND AUDIT, ABOUT  
HOW TO DISCUSS AND DECIDE  
WITH PATIENTS AND  
RELATIVES OR CARERS HOW  
TO MANAGE HYDRATION AT  
END OF LIFE.”**

**(The Neuberger Enquiry 2013)**

**WHERE ARE THESE PROGRAMMES  
ON HYDRATION THROUGHOUT THE  
NATION TO ENSURE THAT PATIENTS  
THOUGHT TO BE DYING IN  
HOSPITALS, HOSPICES, NURSING  
HOMES, CARE HOMES OR AT HOME  
DO NOT SUFFER THIRST AND  
DEHYDRATE TO DEATH?**

# **PREVENTION OF TORTURE IN OUR HOSPITALS AND HOSPICES**

**“IT WAS SHEER TORTURE.” (Kate Adamson, misdiagnosed PVS victim.)**

**There have been many misdiagnoses by doctors. It should be assumed that a person who looks unconscious can feel pain, heat, cold, hunger and thirst. This will prevent such patients undergoing torture by procedures that can arise from assuming that the patient is unconscious.**

**Dr Keith Andrews, Director of Medical Services at London’s Royal Hospital for Neurodisability found that 42% of patients admitted to his unit between 1992 and 1995 had been wrongly diagnosed PVS.**

**Even people correctly diagnosed as PVS have proved the term “permanent” in permanent vegetative state as incorrect as some have been roused to full consciousness.**

**The term “vegetative” is also incorrect. Functional magnetic resonance imaging has demonstrated conscious awareness in patients fulfilling the criteria for a diagnosis of vegetative state. A PVS patient was asked to imagine playing tennis or moving around her home. The patient activated predicted cortical areas in a manner indistinguishable from healthy volunteers. (Science 8.9. 2006, vol 313, p1402).**

**Kate Adamson was misdiagnosed as PVS. It was decided to let her die. After 8 horrible days she showed signs of recovery. She described those 8 days as “sheer torture.” She was not even given any water. “I craved anything to drink. Anything. I obsessively visualised drinking from a huge bottle of orange Gatorade. And I hate orange Gatorade. I did receive lemon flavoured mouth swabs to alleviate dryness but they did nothing to slack my desperate thirst.” Kate wrote a book**

**“Kate’s Journey : Triumph Over Adversity” about the terrifying ordeal.**

**Even if doctors thought she was unconscious with no hope of recovery they should have given attention to fluid intake in case she suffered thirst. Water and simple ingredients to maintain the electrolyte balance is not feeding. The prevention of thirst and the maintenance of the electrolyte balance to help to keep the patient comfortable should be a very important part of palliative care.**

**Doctors have made some astounding mistakes. For example, up to 1986 it was assumed by the overwhelming majority of paediatric anaesthetists that newborn babies could not feel pain. This absurd assumption resulted in babies who needed surgery being operated upon without anaesthetic in many cases or totally inadequate attention to pain relief. The babies were given a paralysing drug so that they could not kick or scream. The babies must have suffered explosions of agony. The same kind of terrible mistake is made concerning babies undergoing slaughter by abortion. Professor Kypros Nicolaides a Professor of Foetology states that babies should receive an anaesthetic for surgical intervention from the first trimester of pregnancy. He is just ignored. The babies undergoing slaughter by abortion must suffer atrocious agonies.**

**Common sense should have a major role in medical ethics. It should NEVER be assumed that a person can’t feel pain, hunger, thirst, cold, heat etc. simply because a person cannot speak up for himself or herself. Such a common sense approach to people in comas, locked in states, PVS, newborn babies or pre-born babies would help to prevent them undergoing torture in our hospitals and hospices.**

**“WE HOLD MOST  
STRONGLY THAT  
DEATH BY  
DEHYDRATION IS  
UNACCEPTABLE,  
INHUMANE AND  
LEADS TO A SLOW AND  
PAINFUL DEATH.”**

**(Dr Anthony Cole, Consultant Paediatrician and  
Magistrate.)**